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TAGS: [KNNP](#) [MNUC](#) [IR](#) [PARM](#) [IAEA](#) [ET](#)  
SUBJECT: ETHIOPIA SURPRISED BY NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE  
ESTIMATE ON IRAN

REF: STATE 162558

Classified By: Pol/Econ Section Chief Michael Gonzales for reasons 1.4  
(B) and (D)

¶1. (C) Ambassador and Pol/Econ Chief provided Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi a copy of the refTel National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) key judgments and non-paper on Iran's Nuclear Intentions and Capabilities on December 4. Pol/Econ Chief detailed the major points from the NIE and the potential ramifications if Iran does, or does not, suspend its proliferation sensitive activities. Prime Minister Meles remarked that he was "surprised" by both the openness of the NIE and its key judgments, noting that "even if Iran was not caught red handed, it was clearly hiding something." Still, Meles noted that he was surprised that Iran had, in fact, maintained a nuclear weapons program.

¶2. (C) Meles asked whether support for civilian-use Iranian uranium enrichment activities outside of Iran remained an option. Pol/Econ Chief emphasized that the key is, first, for Iran to suspend its proliferation sensitive activities and meet its nuclear nonproliferation obligations. Doing so, the Pol/Econ Chief continued, would enable negotiations under the P5 1 offer. The Prime Minister inquired if the NIE was "good news." Pol/Econ Chief stressed that Iran's Fall 2003 suspension of its nuclear weapons program was good news, but knowing that international pressure had succeeded in leading Iran to take that step was also very useful. Pol/Econ Chief stressed Ethiopia's key role as an IAEA Board of Governors member and emphasized that the NIE's judgment suggests that continued international scrutiny and pressure would be both critical and effective in helping persuade Tehran to make a final determination to maintain indefinitely its current nuclear weapons program suspension.  
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